

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 3, 2006 has been received and its contents carefully noted. In response thereto, applicants propose to rewrite claims 21 - 22 in independent form and amend the specification and remaining claims in an effort to place the application in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the objections and rejections of the claims is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-4 and 6-22 have been objected to as being informal for the reasons indicated in the Office Action. Applicants propose to make the corrections to claims 1 and 12 as suggested by the Examiner. It is believed that any informalities in the claims would be corrected so the objection could be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 21-22 contain allowable subject matter. In this amendment, it is proposed that claims 21 and 22 be rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. The suggestions noted by the Examiner in the objection to the claims have been incorporated in the newly independent claims 21 and 22. Accordingly, claims 21-22 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Turning now to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103, claims 1-4, 6, 8, 10-15, 17 and 19-20 as being completely shown by Gaudin (U.S. Patent No. 3,414,210). Claims 7 and 16 have been rejected on the grounds of alleged obviousness when Matsuda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,480,022) is combined with Gaudin. Claims 9 and 18 have been rejected on the grounds of alleged obviousness based on the Gaudin patent. Applicants respectfully disagree with these rejections for the following cogent reasons.

In the Office Action, the Examiner explains in detail how the Gaudin and Matsuda et al. patents are being applied to these claims. The Gaudin patent differs from the present invention as it does not show pairs of spaced apart cooperating longitudinally extending hooks 30, 32, 34, 36 with the pairs of hooks 34, 36 cooperating to define longitudinally extending walls of longitudinally extending channels with the thrusting means 19, 20, 21 operatively disposed in the longitudinally extending channels. The modifying reference to Matsuda et al. does not correct these deficiencies of Gaudin.

In order to emphasize these differences, claims 1 and 12 are proposed to be amended to emphasize that "each said at least one first coupling being at least one pair of spaced apart longitudinally extending hook elements, each pair defining longitudinally extending walls of a longitudinally extending channel therebetween " and " at least one thrusting element being operatively disposed in each longitudinally extending channel." The specification is proposed to be amended to make it consistent with these claim amendments.

Since all of the claims appear to have limitations not shown by the prior art, the rejections of claims under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 are believed to be moot and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that withdrawal of the final Office Action, entry of the amendments and allowance of the application are believed to be in order. Such early favorable action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to call applicants' attorney if any questions remain following review of this response.

Respectfully submitted,

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